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UNCLAS BRATISLAVA 000414

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ROBERT FICO TO VISIT DC IN MAY

1. (SBU) ROBERT FICO, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY SMER, THE MOST POPULAR PARTY IN SLOVAKIA, WOULD LIKE TO TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON DC FOR ONE OR TWO DAYS IN THE PERIOD OF MAY 15-24. POST STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT FICO MEET WITH STATE DAS HEATHER CONLEY AND NSC DIRECTOR DAN FRIED. AS THE MOST POPULAR OPPOSITION POLITICIAN, FICO HAS GREAT INFLUENCE OVER SLOVAK PUBLIC OPINION. HE ALSO DESIRES A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. HIS VISIT WILL BE AN EXCELLENT CHANCE TO STRESS USG HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS OF SLOVAKIA AS A NEW NATO ALLY AND EU MEMBER, BOTH UNDER THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT AND ANY FUTURE GOVERNMENT FICO OR OTHERS MAY LEAD. WASHINGTON INTERLOCUTORS CAN USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND FICO THAT WHILE ACTIONS SPEAK, WORDS MATTER TOO.

2. (U) ACTION REQUEST: PLEASE ADVISE WHICH DATES ARE MOST CONVENIENT TO RECEIVE FICO. HE WILL ARRANGE OTHER APPOINTMENTS THROUGH THE SLOVAK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON.

WEISER

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